



“The Great Universal Genius”: The Reception of Shakespeare in Portuguese Periodicals of the Second Half of the 19th Century

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RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Considered by the writers of the periodicals under study as a universal genius, an essential reference and a timeless model, the poet and playwright William Shakespeare (1564–1616) was the most translated and the most frequently-mentioned British author in the Portuguese periodical press between 1865 and 1890. Broadly speaking, it is possible to divide the reception of Shakespeare in the Portuguese press into six seminal categories, which are analysed in this paper under the following headings: bio-bibliographical studies or sketches; translations of excerpts from his plays; reviews of translations, some of which were published in the periodicals under study; considerations regarding the presentation of Shakespeare’s plays on the Portuguese stage; reviews of operas staged at the S. Carlos Opera House, the librettos of which were based on Shakespeare’s plays; and lastly, the analysis of Shakespearean characters or themes, which were not infrequently based on translations or theatrical or operatic productions.

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Foi um desses grandes gênios que a providência raras vezes enriquece a humanidade; e não sabemos de outro que melhor conhecesse o coração humano, que mais sublimes rasgos de imaginação brotasse, nem que tão poderoso se nos ostente. Ninguém como ele soube jamais pintar o mundo tal como o via, nem mais feio, nem mais belo, com uma verdade admirável, nessas cenas imortais das suas trinta e sete peças, brasão do engenho humano; algumas delas monumentos singulares da mais trágica e sublime poesia¹ (“Real Teatro” 1–2).

INTRODUCTION

Periodical publications play a crucial role not just in the reception and dissemination of foreign trends and models through the intensification of the relationship between different cultures, but also in the detection of taste, attitudes, perceptions and ideologies in the social and cultural context in which they are produced. While endeavouring to correspond to the diverse expectations of their readers, they also exercise a significant influence upon aesthetic tastes, social and political thinking and literary trends.²

Considered by the writers of the periodicals under study as a universal genius, an essential reference and a timeless model, the poet and playwright William Shakespeare (1564–1616) was the most translated and the most frequently-mentioned British author in the Portuguese periodical press between 1865 and 1890.³ The following example, which appeared in a contemporary periodical, is typical of the praise showered upon the poet:

Shakespeare was the greatest poet of the 16th century, one of the greatest figures in the history of literature and the most talented exponent of the dramatic genre, an art in which other poets, with few exceptions, reveal but one side of themselves (...) those parallel features, truth and greatness, the real and the ideal, the pathetic and the sublime, reappear in almost every era of the dramatic art. But by bringing together what kept them apart, Shakespeare’s genius surpassed the confines of everyday poetics. His works are not merely the most prodigious display of the deeds and passions, crimes and virtues of Man, but also of the most daring thoughts that his great imagination brought forth. Nothing born of Man was strange to him (...) Shakespeare is the poet of no nation in particular, but of the whole of the Universe. (Lagrange 3–4)

The writers of the articles were of the opinion that it was Shakespeare’s unique ability to analyse in depth the whole gamut of human emotion that gave him his greatness and unequalled genius. Taking this idea as its point of departure, the present essay will examine the reception of Shakespeare’s work and its portrayal as an aesthetic and literary model in Portuguese educational and leisure magazines.⁴ The term “model” is understood here in its widest sense,

1 “Seldom does Providence bestow upon Man a great genius such as he; and none but he knew the human heart so well, nor more sublime feats of imagination brought forth, nor mightier seems to us to be. None other could ever paint the world as he could see it, more lovely or more vile, with wondrous honesty, through the immortal scenes of seven and thirty plays, the summit of human creativity; amongst them shrines of the most sublime and tragic poesy.” All the translations from the primary sources (originally written in Portuguese) were carried out by the author of this paper. Whenever the texts are written in poetic form, the original is presented in the corpus of this essay and the English translation in a footnote.

2 The periodicals selected for this study are essentially cultural and literary in character, most appearing on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis, rather than those with a vocation for news or politics, which are usually published daily or twice weekly.

3 The date chosen for the beginning of the period under study is due to the fact that 1865 was a crucial landmark for Portuguese culture—the year in which the famous “Coimbra Affair” erupted and a new literary and cultural generation, “the 1870 Generation”, began to make its mark. These writers expanded their intercultural horizons and displayed a readiness to embrace foreign ideologies and models. The date for the end of the period is essentially due to the fact that the *Ultimatum* marked a substantial change in Anglo-Portuguese relations, which left its mark on the periodical press, both in general terms and, more specifically, as far as the reception of Shakespeare was concerned. It is worthy of note that the translation of Shakespeare’s works had been on the increase since 1874, but between 1890 and 1893 incl., no translations of the British playwright’s work were published, a situation caused by the ideological embargo provoked by the *Ultimatum*. See Duarte, “The Politics of Non-Translation” 59–74.

4 Excluding daily newspapers, the Portuguese periodical press of the second half of the nineteenth century can be divided into two groups: firstly, publications of an educational and recreational character for readers who were less well educated and informed—essentially for female readers; secondly, more erudite publications clearly directed towards a better-educated readership and often reflecting the views and ideas of those who were most culturally aware. The references to Shakespeare are found in the former grouping. On this subject see Terenas, “Periódicos”.

implying that it goes beyond the well-known definition presented by Álvaro Manuel Machado and Daniel-Henri Pageaux, of a hybrid grouping of elements, which are “the object of imitation and reproduction after the time of their creation and publication, beyond the frontiers of their cultural origin” (180). Hence, the way the concept of the “model” has been employed (British model, in the case in point) includes different phases according to the way it was conceived by different writers, not only due to the specific areas they dealt with, but also to varying degrees of awareness or recognition of certain paradigms, values and figures.

It had been customary in Portugal, at least since the beginning of Romanticism, for translations of foreign authors—especially French—to be published in the periodical press, along with translations of articles which had originally appeared in Parisian magazines and newspapers, such as the *Revue des deux mondes*.⁵ The tradition was kept alive throughout the period under study, which explains why the image and the reception of Shakespeare were often filtered through French mediation, a consequence of the persistent influence of French culture in Portugal (and in the rest of continental Europe) along the whole of the nineteenth century.⁶

The concept of image, here, is taken to mean the result of a process of becoming aware of a distinction between the Self and the Other, elicited by a significant distance between two cultural realities. Image, therefore, is a cultural fact which is the outcome of a bilateral exchange, undertaken by an individual (or group) who confronts the unfamiliar and (re)configures it.⁷ However, according to Gilles Deleuze and Stuart Hall, the relationship between the Self and the Other is always linked to the exercise of power, so that the asymmetry which almost always exists between two cultures at any point in history should never be underestimated (Deleuze 18; Hall 8 and 49–50). In fact, when one of the intervening nations enjoys political and economic superiority, as was the case of Britain in the period under study, there is a natural dependency on the part of the weaker nation and a tendency towards the emulation of the literary and cultural system which is thought to be superior. The concept of reception, on the other hand, derives primarily from the theories of Hans Robert Jauss (*Toward an Aesthetic*) and Wolfgang Iser (*The Act of Reading*), particularly as regards the need for an awareness of the value systems of the target public and its respective “horizon of expectations”, which exert a significant influence on the construction and diffusion of an image. Taking such theories as its point of departure, the following part of the paper will examine how Shakespeare’s image was constructed and became disseminated.

Broadly speaking, it is possible to divide the construction of Shakespeare’s reception and image in the Portuguese press into six seminal categories, which are analysed in this paper under the following headings: bio-bibliographical studies or sketches; translations of excerpts from his plays; reviews of translations, some of which were published in the periodicals under study; considerations regarding the presentation of Shakespeare’s plays on the Portuguese stage; reviews of operas staged at the S. Carlos Opera House, the *librettos* of which were based on Shakespeare’s plays; and lastly, the analysis of Shakespearean characters or themes, which were not infrequently based on translations or theatrical or operatic productions.

1. BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES OR SKETCHES

Like many of the bio-bibliographical studies of the period, an article by an anonymous author published in January 1887 in *A Ilustração Portuguesa*⁸ dealt with certain aspects of Shakespeare’s life and work, the Elizabethan theatre, and the principal Shakespearean themes. According to the writer, the justification for the lengthy article on the playwright was the 1866 production of *Othello* at the S. Carlos Opera House and, more specifically, the theatrical production of *Hamlet*

5 One of the most frequently-cited French journals in the Portuguese periodicals under study.

6 On this issue see Machado and Pageaux, *Da Literatura Comparada* 23; Terenas, “French Mediation” 161–170.

7 Initially divided into two separate lines of research explored by the French School led by J.-M. Carré and M.-F. Guyard and the Aachen School (in which Hugo Dyserinck’s contribution has been influential), imagology was widely disseminated across the great centres of European thought in the nineteen-seventies. Arguing the need to deconstruct the discourse produced by the encounter (conjunctive or disjunctive) between the Self and the Other, literary and cultural imagology quickly invaded the academic world of Comparative Studies. More recently there have been noteworthy contributions to this field from the likes of Sousa, *Do Cá*; Beller and Leerssen, *Intercultural Alternatives*; Zacharasiewicz, *Imagology Revisited*; Simões, *Imagótipos Literários*.

8 One of the better illustrated magazines of the day, *A Ilustração Portuguesa. Semanário. Revista Literária e Artística* (Lisbon, 1884–1890) was also one of the most popular.

which was then on stage at the D. Maria II National Theatre. The text was accompanied by a curious engraving (Figure 1) in which Shakespeare appears surrounded by several of his leading characters and by scenes from his literary creations.



Figure 1 (“As Nossas Gravuras. Shakespeare” 19).

When writing about the playwright’s life, the periodical writers invariably began by reminding their readers of his humble beginnings, referring, for example, to the fact that Shakespeare had been born in a modest “red-tiled cottage, situated in a dirty, damp alleyway in an English provincial town” called Stratford-upon-Avon (“As Nossas Gravuras. Shakespeare” 19) and that after having received a somewhat rudimentary education, he had been employed as a butcher. Regarding this period of the poet’s life, João Seabra⁹ wrote the following in the periodical *O Camões*:¹⁰

It is said he was already fond of literature at this time. They still talk in his native town of the jests, some more ribald than others, with which he graced his neighbours, and the long, tearful speeches, full of pathos and comedy, he gave amonsbrandishing a butcher’s knife over the dead bodies of his victims – sheep, stretched out at his feet. (247)

The authors of the articles went on to tell the story of his marriage to Anne Hathaway and the hard times which the young William faced in his native town, which eventually led him to try his luck in London, where he was given his first job—taking care of the spectators’ horses outside theatre entrances. It was only later that he got his chance as an actor (“As Nossas Gravuras. Shakespeare” 19). Another point which was often focussed in these bio-bibliographical sketches was that Shakespeare’s contemporaries were both impressed and, at the same time, indignant that such a popular and talented author should not have attended a university (“A Revista das Revistas” 78).

According to information which is available today, however, William Shakespeare’s upbringing was not exactly humble. His mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a farmer, while his father, John Shakespeare, at the time of his son’s birth, was not only a prosperous merchant with a finger in several different pies but was also an influential figure in local government. Although little is known of the playwright’s childhood, it is likely that he attended Stratford Grammar School, where the level of teaching would have been quite fair. On the other hand, there is no evidence to confirm that Shakespeare worked in a butcher’s shop, though it was, in

⁹ This may have been the Brazilian lawyer and politician José Joaquim Seabra (1855–1942).

¹⁰ The commemorations of the three-hundredth anniversary of the death of Luiz Vaz de Camões, in 1880, led to the appearance of new periodical publications with the great Portuguese poet’s name in their titles. *O Camões. Semanário Popular Ilustrado* (Porto, 1880 and 1883) is an example in point.

fact, one of his father's businesses, along with others which were of a less physical nature such as a glove factory and a dairy. Whereas it is true that his father's wealth and social position were no longer what they had been, the image of Shakespeare's childhood and adolescence, as given in the periodicals, is unquestionably picturesque and anecdotal and based on folk tales and romanticised accounts, the veracity of which have never been confirmed.

Unfortunately, no reliable evidence exists concerning the time between Shakespeare's marriage and his departure for London, and consequently, this period of his life has been termed "the lost years" by present-day authors (Goodwin 6; Holden 53) who admit, however, that his reputation in his native town was far from impeccable. Why the young William left Stratford is not absolutely clear, but a possible explanation may be that he had to flee due to a charge of poaching deer on someone else's land. The periodicals were clearly more interested in exploiting the more obscure and less reliable episodes of his life and, indeed, as far as the better-known details are concerned, such as having worked as an actor and playwright in the Lord Chamberlain's Company; being one of the proprietors of the Globe Theatre; its destruction by fire in 1613; or that the company then called the King's Men moved to a different theatre—the Blackfriars; not a word was written. In this context, it is worth remembering that while having an educational slant, these periodicals were often more interested in entertaining their readers.

A list of Shakespeare's writing for the stage generally followed (often with several errors in the titles and dates, which is unsurprising given the incipency of studies on the author), together with comments on the success of his plays during his lifetime, performances of which were not infrequently attended by Queen Elizabeth I and by King James I, themselves. However, despite the rapturous applause of the crowds which filled the theatres where his plays were performed, the periodical writers considered that Shakespeare suffered bitterly as he was constantly being insulted by the men of letters of his day, who were incapable of recognising his extraordinary talent. Referring to his sonnets—an extremely important part of his work which was almost entirely ignored by the texts under study—Guiomar Torresão¹¹ wrote the following words on the subject of Shakespeare's alleged resentment:

The collection of Shakespeare's sonnets ("The Passionate Pilgrim"¹²), feverishly composed in the vigour of youth and with the opulent ease, which, in his restless flights of imagination, his pen could hardly follow, clearly reveals the melancholy, discouragement and revolt of his fiery soul, restrained and almost suffocated by the humiliating costume of a jester! (6)

Camilo Castelo Branco,¹³ on the other hand, praised Shakespeare as a self-made man, arguing that he had discovered a practical way of putting his talent to good use, earning a successful living and achieving a healthy financial position at the end of his life. Curiously, Samuel Smiles in *Self-help* (1859) considered the poet as the model of a true businessman, which, in his case, was a sincere compliment (169). Rather than being embittered, Shakespeare, in Camilo's view, had taken advantage of his talent to make money: "It was the first time that economics and genius had come together as one" ("*Secção Literária*" 3). In effect, the periodical writers were unanimous in affirming that Shakespeare had managed his finances well enough to retire to his birthplace in old age and to live quietly for the rest of his days.

On the subject of Shakespeare's death, which seems to have occurred some time after he had entertained Michael Drayton (1563–1631) and Ben Jonson (1572–1637) at New Place, his fine home at Stratford—one of the stranger tales of the playwright's demise was retold in the *Arquivo Popular*.¹⁴ According to this version, Shakespeare's death was caused by the shock of a visit to the grave of his son, Hamnet, who had died in 1596. In this supposed visit to Stratford

11 Guiomar Delfina de Noronha Torresão (1844–1898) wrote in several of the educational and recreational magazines of the day, particularly those intended for female readers.

12 The example referred to was not a sonnet but a poem twenty verses long.

13 A novelist of genius and also the founder of and contributor to several periodicals, Camilo Ferreira Botelho Castelo Branco (1825–1890) never expressed any particular interest in Great Britain or in British authors throughout his troubled life, nor in his vast literary production. He did, however, have a relationship with an ill-fated young woman of English descent called Fanny Owen, who is mentioned in certain of his works.

14 The *Arquivo Popular* (Porto, 1871–1874) exemplifies the type of periodical which was almost encyclopaedic in its coverage of subjects. At the same time as it attempted to cover every area of knowledge in an accessible way, the magazine was characterised by its markedly romantic taste for tragic events, melancholic poetry and stories of crime, mystery or unquenchable passion.

graveyard, Shakespeare allegedly witnessed a scene similar to the one he had created in Act V Scene 1 of his tragedy *Hamlet*. Indeed, a comparison of this episode—which the anonymous writer considered anecdotal—with *Hamlet*, reveals that it is no more than an adaptation of the dialogue between Hamlet and Horatio, while some of the phrases are actually literal translations (“A Morte de Shakespeare” 239). This particular text could be of capital importance in the history of Shakespeare’s works in Portugal, as it may be the first translation of an excerpt from *Hamlet*, a possibility which is examined further in point 2.

After his death, Shakespeare slipped into partial oblivion in his own country, while ironically, he became the target of fierce attacks by foreign authors, among whom Voltaire was unquestionably the best known. Such insulting comments, coming as they did from continental intellectuals, drew the attention of the British people to their great poet, but for a time, Shakespeare’s plays did not achieve the success they deserved (“A Revista das Revistas” 7). According to Guiomar Torresão, Voltaire, in his essay *Appel à toutes les nations de l’Europe des jugements d’un écrivain anglais* (1761), refused to recognise the “profound moral lesson and the grandiose passion of Shakespeare’s plays”, while daring to denounce the absence of “literary elegance” in his writing (6). Curiously, it was in the same year, 1761, that the first references to the works of Shakespeare appeared in the Portuguese press, in articles in the *Gazeta Literária* by the friar Bernardo de Lima.¹⁵

Generally speaking, the periodical writers blamed Voltaire for Shakespeare’s lack of esteem in eighteenth-century Europe, at a time when superficiality and empty and artificial formulas were the rule, and innovation was unwelcome.¹⁶ Ironically, however, it was Voltaire, due to his frontal attack, who would awaken the British public to Shakespeare’s greatness:

In 1712, Voltaire, who had recently returned from England, treated the works of the great dramatist with scant respect. Unintentionally, however, Voltaire’s irony acted as a stimulus to English poet’s reputation. Shakespeare finally became the topic of discussion in London; his work was republished and performed — even in Glasgow; a favourable current of opinion was born and the English people came alive to the colossal figure that England had, until then, ignored. From then on, year by year and day by day, admiration and veneration has grown for this great and glorious master, one of the foremost spirits of all time. (“As Nossas Gravuras. Shakespeare” 19)

Another issue which is discussed in these bio-bibliographical sketches, and in short articles devoted to the subject, is the authorship of the plays attributed to Shakespeare. Without adopting a definitive position on the question, the writers, in general, expressed scepticism towards the idea, which was popular in the United States at the time, that the true author of the works attributed to Shakespeare was Francis Bacon (“A Revista das Revistas” 78). Generally speaking, the writers considered the arguments of the American literary authorities, such as Ignatius Donnelly, as quite excentric.¹⁷ Sampaio Bruno,¹⁸ for instance, proposed to carry out a thorough investigation to prove the “authorship of the work of the playwright” (2), a task which, as far as anyone knows, he never concluded. After explaining and analysing Jules Villeman’s thesis, which he had put forward in *Problème littéraire: Bacon est-il l’auteur des oeuvres dramatiques ou de quelques-unes des oeuvres dramatiques attribués à Shakespeare?* (1875), the Brazilian writer João de Mendonça concluded that although Shakespeare, admittedly, had not enjoyed the education thought necessary to be able to create works of such a high standard, he was of the view that the “anti-Shakespearean thesis” was not fully proven (3).

From their articles, one can conclude that the writers did not allow themselves to be carried away by theories which are still unproven today, and in fact their judgement on this issue appears to have been quite balanced. Indeed, it now seems certain that Shakespeare was the true author of the plays which are attributed to him.

15 On this question see Afonso, “Mister Shakespeare, I presume...” 122–123.

16 It should be noted that, during the eighteenth century, Voltaire was a reference for Portuguese writers and translations of his plays were featured regularly at theatres in Lisbon and Oporto.

17 The periodical writers were referring, very probably, to *The Great Cryptogram: Francis Bacon’s Cipher in the so-called Shakespeare Plays* (1888).

18 Author, essayist, philosopher and one of the leading Portuguese intellectuals of his day, José Pereira de Sampaio Bruno (1857–1915) was a member of the group of republicans who took part in the revolt of January 31, 1881.

The majority of the excerpts translated into Portuguese, in the periodicals under study, were from *Hamlet*, followed, at some distance, by *Othello*. José António de Freitas¹⁹ is the translator whose signature appears most often, followed by D. Luis, despite the fact that the King of Portugal carried out many more translations of Shakespeare's works, all within the time span of the present article. This was almost certainly due to Freitas' popularity at the time, and to the success of the plays (*Hamlet* and *Othello*) he translated for the D. Maria II National Theatre, which are dealt with later in this paper. Among the other Shakespeare translations appearing in the periodicals were excerpts from the following plays: *The Merchant of Venice* by Bulhão Pato,²⁰ *Romeo and Juliet*, by Augusto Lacerda²¹ and Olímpio de Magalhães, and finally, *King Lear* by Camilo Castelo Branco.

In general terms, the contribution of Portuguese periodicals to the reception of these Portuguese translations of Shakespeare's plays may be divided into three principal categories: hitherto-unknown publications of translations of excerpts from his plays; translations of works which had not previously been published in their entirety; and the reproduction of parts of previously-published plays.

2.1. UNPUBLISHED TRANSLATIONS

According to the study entitled *Para o Estabelecimento de uma Bibliografia Britânica em Português (1554–1900) (1998)*, a reference work for researchers in Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies, which from now on will be referred to as *BBP*, the first translation of *Hamlet* was by Eduardo Augusto Vidal,²² the celebrated monologue "to be or not to be" which appeared in a collection entitled *Crepúsculos*, in 1872.²³ However, in one of the periodicals under study, more precisely *Arquivo Popular* (nº 21 of vol. I, May 1871), the story is told that on a visit to Stratford graveyard, Shakespeare was supposedly confronted by the tragicomical episode he had composed for Act V Scene 1 of *Hamlet*, consisting of a long dialogue between two gravediggers. The article is therefore of vital importance for the history of Shakespeare in Portuguese translation, for it appears to be the first of an excerpt from *Hamlet*, albeit with several alterations, exclusions and adaptations, but also including literal translation of several parts of the dialogue. Published anonymously, perhaps by way of French mediation, the original text was undoubtedly adapted to enhance its appeal to the periodical's readership.

A Portuguese translation of part of *Othello*, the second most-translated Shakespeare play in the periodicals under analysis, appears to have been unidentified prior to my study. The monologue from Act V Scene II appeared in the magazine *O Progresso*²⁴ in 1869, its translator being identified merely as "sr. Nazareth".²⁵ As neither Maria João da Rocha Afonso, a pioneer

19 Born in Brazil, José António de Freitas (1849–1931) came as a youth to Portugal, having concluded his studies at the Escola Politécnica and at the Curso Superior de Letras. He contributed to several magazines and translated plays by writers other than Shakespeare and was a corresponding member of the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa.

20 Poet of Portuguese romanticism, essayist and translator, Raimundo António de Bulhão Pato (1828–1912) contributed to several of the periodicals under study.

21 Fernando Augusto de Lacerda e Mello (1865–1918) became an active contributor to the press after 1886.

22 A loyal disciple of Castilho, Eduardo Augusto Vidal (1841–1907) contributed to a wide range of educational and leisure magazines, with a particular emphasis on Shakespeare. A celebrated poet in his day and the author of works for the stage, his admiration for this great genius of world literature was perfectly natural at this time. E.A. Vidal (as he signed himself) was familiar with the English language, as his translation of the monologue "to be or not to be" demonstrates.

23 Examination of the abovementioned collection reveals that E.A. Vidal not only translated the celebrated monologue but also the dialogue which followed it between Hamlet and Ophelia (Act III Scene I), up to the moment when the leading character leaves the stage. See Vidal, "Hamlet" 219–224.

24 Intended particularly for the education of Portuguese women, *O Progresso* (Lisbon, 1869) was highly influenced by British outlook and culture.

25 Very probably this refers to the journalist and writer José Júlio dos Santos Nazaré (1848–1879), who was employed on the *Diário de Notícias* (Lisbon, 1865–today) and the *Diário Popular* (Lisbon, 1866–today), as well as on the *Jornal de Lisboa* (Lisbon, 1865–1867), the *Gazeta de Portugal* (Lisbon, 1865–1868) and *Novidades* (Lisbon, 1868–1869). Santos Nazaré began his literary career with translations of stories published in *O Conservador* (Lisbon, 1865).

of Shakespeare studies in Portugal,²⁶ nor the *BBP* mention the translation, it appears that it has remained in obscurity until now.

That same year, João Augusto da Graça Barreto²⁷ commented in the periodical *O Arquivo Contemporâneo* (Lisbon, 1869),²⁸ on a translation of two excerpts from *Othello*, which he described as previously unpublished—the first taken from Act I Scene I, and the second from Act IV Scene II. The writer affirmed that the excerpts he was quoting were merely “samples” of the only translation of *Othello* in his own language that he was aware of, and that the translator’s name “though unrevealed, was no less illustrious nor less well-known, and were it not, these fragments alone would be sufficient to grant him a place in public esteem” (89). A comparison of these extracts with Rebelo da Silva’s translation, published in 1865, with which Graça Barreto was clearly unfamiliar, reveals that they were entirely distinct versions.²⁹ However, a brief reference to Alfredo de Vigny, in the same article, exposes the identity of the “shy” author, most probably Luís Ribeiro de Sá, who, in 1880, would publish a translation of Act V of *Othello* “according to A. Vigny’s excerpts”. It should be emphasised, however, that the edition in question refers only to Act V, so that the publication in *O Arquivo Contemporâneo*, of Act I Scene I would appear to constitute a hitherto-undiscovered case in the history of Shakespeare translations in Portugal. The translation of Act III Scene V of *Romeo and Juliet* by Olímpio de Magalhães, which was published in 1887 in *Mosaico. Semanário de Instrução e Recreio*,³⁰ is also a new addition as it does not appear in *BBP*. Generally speaking, the translations were carried out from French and reveal significant alterations when compared with Shakespeare’s original texts. The journalists-translators selected the better-known scenes, adapting them to correspond to the ultra-romantic taste which was then in vogue in Portugal, particularly among women. Such excerpts were intended essentially to entertain their female readership, sacrificing, as a consequence, the universal appeal which is one of the principal features of Shakespeare’s plays.

Lastly, an excerpt, translated by Camilo Castelo Branco, from Act I Scene II of *King Lear* which appeared in the periodical *Repúblicas*³¹ in 1886, may well be the first such version attributable to a leading name in Portuguese literature.³² It is, therefore, worth examining the reasons behind its publication more closely. As Camilo’s primary concern in this article was to analyse the translations of D. Luís, the King of Portugal, he thought it necessary to study the thinking behind Shakespeare’s works, which emerges through his characters. Camilo considered that

26 According to the *BBP*, the first translation of *Othello* into Portuguese was anonymous and was dated 1836. However, according to Maria João da Rocha Afonso, the first translation of *Othello*, although unpublished, dates back to the eighteenth century. The translator was Simão de Melo Brandão, and his manuscript constitutes the first full translation into Portuguese of a Shakespeare play. Although the translation is of the greatest importance, as Rocha Afonso affirms, due to its being the first of its kind, it has remained inexplicably unpublished until today, so that it has not acted as a reference for other Shakespeare translators, nor as a stimulus to Portuguese public interest in the work of the distinguished playwright. It should be noted that, according to the same source, even before Simão de Melo Brandão, José Anastácio da Cunha had translated the excerpt known as “The Seven Ages of Man” from the play *As You Like It* (Afonso, “Simão de Melo Brandão” 129–146). In 1820, Almeida Garrett also translated an excerpt of the play based on a French version by Jean-François Ducis, *Othello ou le maure de Venise*, which is also still unpublished (see Afonso, “*Othello* Estreia-se no Placo Português” 123–134). And, in 1856, Luís Augusto Rebelo da Silva published *Othello ou o Mouro de Veneza*.

27 João Augusto da Graça Barreto (1843–1855) contributed to several periodicals, was a paleographer, writer, type-setter-compositor for oriental languages at the Imprensa Nacional de Lisboa and a clerk at the Torre do Tombo, having carried out translations from Latin, German, French and English. Graça Barreto was also involved in the lengthy and famous literary controversy caused by the translation of *Faustus* by Castilho and published two works on the subject: *Lição a um Literato a Propósito do Fausto, Resposta ao Sr. José Gomes Monteiro* (1873) and *A Questão do Fausto pela Última Vez, Observações a Alguns Contendores e Desengano aos Literatos* (1874).

28 A periodical similar in vocation to the *Arquivo Popular*.

29 It should be remembered that before publishing his Shakespeare translations, D. Luís de Bragança used to pass them round a restricted circle of friends for their appreciation, and that the authorship of the first editions was not revealed. However, a comparison between the two translations in question and D. Luís’ translation, published in 1885, leads to the conclusion that, once again, the two versions are quite different.

30 *O Mosaico. Semanário de Instrução e Recreio* (Porto, 1865), a paradigmatic example of the contamination of forms, styles and content in nineteenth century periodicals, belonged to a group of periodicals in which the educational emphasis was often diluted by the leisure content.

31 Intended for a better-educated readership and reflecting the views and outlook of a more restricted and cultured group, *Repúblicas* (Lisbon, 1884–1886) was an example of an assumedly more erudite publication.

32 If the two versions of *King Lear* from the beginning of the nineteenth century are excluded, because, as Maria João da Rocha Afonso informs, they were never published and their whereabouts is unknown (“Mister Shakespeare I presume...” 69), the first translation of the tragedy, according to *BBP*, is from 1896. However, this translation, by José Maria da Costa e Silva, was based on a French version by Jean-François Ducis.

Shakespeare had been unjustly accused of subscribing to the same preconceived ideas, superstitions and astrological beliefs which were popular among the less well-educated people of his day. In support of his argument, Camilo offered his readers the translation of a monologue spoken by Edmund, the bastard son of the Earl of Gloucester, which was sufficient, in his opinion, to prove that the playwright did not share such views, and that their presence was justified by the fact that his plays were intended to appeal to the tastes and beliefs of the broad spectrum of the public to whom they were directed (“*Secção Literária*” 3). In fact, Camilo seems to have been more interested in analysing the life and work of the author than in the translation of the text itself, so that the purpose of the translated excerpt would appear to be to demonstrate the intellectual superiority of the playwright over his contemporaries.

In conclusion, it can be said that the type of periodicals under study was considered the ideal vehicle for the publication of translations of Shakespeare’s work in the second half of the nineteenth century, and indeed, as far as it is known, none were published elsewhere, either before or afterwards, so that they are an essential reference for any study dealing with the reception of Shakespeare in Portugal.

2.2. BEFORE PUBLICATION IN BOOK FORM

Although Bulhão Pato only published his translation of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1881, two years before, in 1879, the periodical *A Arte*³³ had presented an excerpt from Act V Scene I. In 1886, a year before José António de Freitas published a complete version of *Hamlet*, preceded by his own critical review, the periodical *Lisboa Elegante*³⁴ had printed his translation of the monologue from Act I Scene II, and *A Ilustração. Revista de Portugal e do Brasil*³⁵ had printed an excerpt from his translation as a caption to an engraving showing the celebrated “graveyard scene” (Figure 2):



Figure 2 (“As Nossas Gravuras. Hamlet” 21).

³³ Intended as an educational resource on art, *A Arte* (Lisbon, 1879–1881) specialised in the reproduction of works of art by both Portuguese and foreign artists.

³⁴ Educational in character, but principally intended as leisure reading for Portuguese women, *Lisboa Elegante* (Lisbon, 1886–1887) placed particular emphasis on the daily life of the middle-class woman of the capital city, concentrating on society gossip and fashion.

³⁵ Much appreciated by the public, as is attested by its wide circulation, *A Ilustração. Revista de Portugal e do Brasil* (Paris/Lisbon, 1884–1891) was founded by Mariano Pina, who was then a corresponding contributor in Paris, and benefitted from contributors who were well known in the fields of Portuguese literature and journalism. Printed in Paris, the magazine offered high-quality illustrations and became one of the most socially accepted periodicals of its day.

Hence, by printing these extracts before they appeared in book form, contemporary periodicals provided a valuable service to both authors and publishers by publicising future editions. Moreover, translators found them an excellent way to assess readers' appreciation of their work, so that the periodicals acted as a kind of laboratory in which the reaction of the public to new texts and translations could be evaluated.

2.3. REPRODUCTION OF TRANSLATED PASSAGES OF SHAKESPEARE PLAYS AFTER THEY HAD BEEN PUBLISHED IN BOOK FORM

In 1877, the King of Portugal, D. Luís, published a complete translation of *Hamlet*, carried out directly from English. Three years later, in 1880, the periodical *O Globo Ilustrado*³⁶ printed the King's translation of Act IV Scene I, and in 1889, *A Ilustração Portuguesa* published Act III Scene I from Hamlet's entrance and the monologue "to be or not to be", as far as the end of the scene.

In 1878, Bulhão Pato published his translation of Act IV of the same tragedy, which appeared in the *Diário de Portugal* (Lisbon, 1877–1884) that same year. Six years later, in 1884, the famous monologue appeared yet again in the *Gazeta Musical*.³⁷ In the same year, the periodical would also offer a short excerpt – the famous "willow song", from José Antonio de Freitas' *Othello* (1882).

In 1885, Luís Ribeiro de Sá's translation of Act V of *Othello* appeared in the *Revista Teatral*,³⁸ an excerpt which had already been published in 1880, as mentioned previously. Its re-edition in a specialised theatre magazine five years later was undoubtedly due to the resounding success of the play at the D. Maria II Theatre (in José António de Freitas' version), over three consecutive years, which is dealt with later in this paper.

Hence, through the publication of excerpts from plays which had previously appeared in book form, the educational and recreational press offered a valuable service by publicising the original while, at the same time, catering for less well-educated readers, who might not be prepared to read Shakespeare in the full version, but who were ready to read excerpts from the plays, if only to be able to discuss them in the circles of society in which they moved.

3. REVIEWS OF TRANSLATIONS WHICH EITHER APPEARED IN THE PERIODICALS UNDER STUDY OR ELSEWHERE

Several of the periodical writers contributed reviews of translations of Shakespeare into Portuguese, particularly those made by the King of Portugal, which quite naturally attracted the attention of the press of the day.

Opinions on D. Luís' translations varied considerably, although the majority of the reviewers were quite complimentary. Pinheiro Chagas,³⁹ for instance, in a brief biographical sketch in *O Occidente*,⁴⁰ accompanied by a portrait of the King, emphasised the royal translator's literary leanings, and was unstinting in his praise for the King's thorough and demanding translations

36 Although its illustrations were not of a high standard, *O Globo Ilustrado. Publicação Semanal* (Lisbon, 1880) like other similar magazines, satisfied its educational and recreational function.

37 The principal aims of the *Gazeta Musical* (Lisbon, 1844–1866) were to cultivate a taste for music and publicise musical events both at home and abroad.

38 The main aim of periodicals like the *Revista Teatral* (Lisbon, 1885) was to educate or at least to inform public taste through critical reviews of theatre productions, operas, concerts or other cultural events. The theatres at which productions were most often covered were the S. Carlos, the D. Maria II, the Príncipe Real, the Ginásio and the Rua dos Condes. The *Revista Teatral* also endeavoured to publicise both Portuguese and foreign artists and playwrights, possibly representing a more serious attempt to carry out theatrical reviews in an impartial fashion.

39 Manuel Joaquim Pinheiro Chagas (1842–1895) was a profuse contributor to periodicals of an educational and recreational character, in particular to the *Jornal do Domingo* (Lisbon, 1881–1888), on which he was a journalist and literary editor, and to *A Ilustração Portuguesa. Semanário. Revista Literária e Artística* (Lisbon, 1884–1890). Pinheiro Chagas' activities were many and varied and included translation, playwriting, poetry, fiction, politics and journalism. His fictional works included a collection of novels entitled *A Varanda de Julieta* (1876), which reveal his appropriation of well-known Shakespearean themes and characters.

40 Of all the periodicals which appeared during the period under study, the most important was, perhaps, *O Occidente* (Lisbon, 1878–1915), which survived for thirty-seven years, a remarkable achievement compared with most of the other ephemeral periodicals of its day. *O Occidente* was unanimously recognised by its counterparts as one of the best publications of the time.

of Shakespeare's plays. He implied, moreover, that D. Luís had previously undertaken a period of reading and study in search of the true meaning of the text ("El-Rei D. Luís" 170).

In the opinion of the vast majority of the writers, D. Luís was an excellent translator because he was always faithful to the meaning of the original text, while demonstrating an attitude of humility and respect towards the monumentality of the great playwright's work.⁴¹ Underpinning this point of view were certain theoretical ideas concerning translation (which, today, are the topic of discussion), according to which "faith to the letter" of the original was not only synonymous with quality but also the key to the true meaning that the author wished to convey.

Outstanding among the reviews of the King's translations is a long article by Camilo Castelo Branco, mentioned earlier, which was published in 1886 in the periodical *Repúblicas. Revista Política e Literária* (Lisbon, 1884–1886) ("Secção Literária" 2–4). The final part of the article was also reproduced in *A Ilustração Portuguesa*, in 1889, shortly after the Monarch's death which occurred on October 19 of that year ("Othello. O Mouro de Veneza" 7–8). In Camilo's view, D. Luís was a superlative translator of Shakespeare, precisely due to the fact that, despite the negative reactions of certain critics, he had followed both the Bard's style and language closely, transposing them faithfully and brilliantly into Portuguese:

Shakespeare was not a fragrant garden with exquisite flower beds: he was an overgrown jungle, filled with birds of exotic plumage and wild animals with unfamiliar cries. (...) he who desires to transplant Shakespeare to his own language and neither wishes nor knows how to imitate and respect the savageness of the words, should refrain from attempting such a forbidding enterprise.

We shall see later that D. Luís I clearly recognised where his duty lay, declining to spread innocuous verbiage to hide the distasteful parts which might cause discomfort to delicate dispositions. ("Secção Literária 2–3)

In Camilo's opinion the true novelty of D. Luís' translation of *Othello* was its "faithfulness" to the original, because the story of the moor of Venice was already well known to the Portuguese public due to opera and theatre productions and earlier-published translations. Moreover, citations, allusions and parodies frequently appeared in the press, in which, for instance, the murder of a woman by a jealous husband would be likened to the tragic story of *Othello*. In fact, even the Rossio shoemaker who stabbed his wife to death could, at least, feel the satisfaction of being termed "an Othello" in the newspapers.⁴² Indeed, Shakespeare's characters were parodied on several occasions⁴³ precisely because they were already familiar to the public through "free" translations or excerpts adapted from the French language, rather than from full translations of the whole text of a play.

Although by 1885, the year in which D. Luís' translation of *Othello* was published, Shakespeare's characters were already familiar to the Portuguese public, a literal translation of the playwright's words was, according to Camilo, an arduous challenge which had never before been successfully accomplished ("Secção Literária" 3). Camilo, who was himself a greatly-admired novelist with a rich and exuberant command of language, then analysed the passages which he considered best illustrated D. Luís' ability to exploit the range of possibilities provided by the Portuguese language, above all where the original vocabulary was obsolete or possibly indecorous. Of particular interest are Camilo's comparisons between the translations of D. Luís I and José António de Freitas, who, in the writer's words, "remodelled 'Iago' in accordance with the zoological candour of the box seats at the theatre" ("Secção Literária" 2), underlining that the latter translator's intention was to create a version for the Portuguese stage.

In Camilo's view, D. Luís was an exemplary translator of the great British playwright: he neither "cast prudish veils over the author's naked figures", nor did he "sweeten his embittered phrases", or "water down the heady wine of those images which scald the imagination", much less "diminish the stature of this giant with mannered speeches" ("Secção Literária" 3), and would go down in history as a Portuguese monarch who was a profound connoisseur of his native

41 See, for instance, Macedo, "Letras e Artes" 71; Lima, "Shakespeare Traduzido em Português" 94–95; or "A Revista das Revistas" 351.

42 On this subject see Duarte, "The Politics of Non-Translation" 65; and Silva, "Tradução e Cultura Literária" 246.

43 On this subject see Afonso, "Mister Shakespeare, I presume..." 17–45.

language, a man of culture, and one who knew best how to marry the exercise of authority with the promotion of the arts. Moreover, the translation had been carried out directly from the original English and unlike his contemporaries, Camilo was keen to improve his knowledge of the language. Finally, the author had recently been awarded with a long-awaited ascension to the nobility, which, in his eyes, undoubtedly cast the Bragança monarchy in a favourable light.

Contrasting with this generous assessment, certain writers were critical regarding D. Luis' translations, among whom the best known were Silva Pinto and Fialho de Almeida. Immediately after the publication of *Hamlet*, in 1877, António José da Silva Pinto⁴⁴ wrote a scathing and provocative article for the *Revista Literária do Porto*,⁴⁵ in which he attacked the King's translation, accusing him of having a shaky, decrepit and dishonest style (99) and, moreover, that his translation was an assault on the rules of grammar:

In our opinion, it would be better for D. Luis to hide his work from public scrutiny, and the reason is simple: D. Luis may, perhaps, know how "to reign" according to constitutional practises, on which there is nothing to be said: however, what D. Luis patently reveals by transporting (?) this masterpiece of the English language to the mother tongue is – ignorance of both languages and the total absence of a writer's basic skills. And we will prove it. (90)

Silva Pinto then turned his attention to the translation of Act V Scene I, comparing the King's translation with the original English text to expose his errors, while offering certain theoretical considerations on the task of the translator. Contradicting Camilo's opinion, Silva Pinto concluded that D. Luis had opted for a literal translation when he ought not to have done so, in view of the language and status of certain of the characters. Moreover, the King had suppressed certain awkward phrases which were, in the writer's opinion, easily translatable "word for word" (90). Later, in the same magazine, Silva Pinto replied to the press criticism he had received due to his acerbic assessment of D. Luis' work. Although, as mentioned previously, there were other negative reviews of the King's translations, the periodicals paid little attention to them. Silva Pinto's counter-attack was of some importance, however, and it may be an indication of the existence, in certain intellectual circles, of depreciative assessments of the King's translations, although such opinions were not manifested publicly. One of the principal reasons for this was that such views were held by republican journalists who, irrespective of the quality of the King's translation, would not have failed to take advantage of the opportunity to castigate the monarchy.

Fialho de Almeida⁴⁶ who was, together with Silva Pinto, one of the few writers who openly criticised the King's work, considered that D. Luis' enterprise had failed because he had the audacity to attempt to translate the work of a genius. In Fialho de Almeida's opinion, Shakespeare was too great and complex to be translated by just anyone and D. Luis was not minimally qualified to undertake such a task. Emphasising that it was shameful that such works should be so badly mistreated in public translations, Fialho's harsh review was couched in the ironic and sarcastic tone, which was one of the characteristics of the periodical, *Os Gatos*:⁴⁷

With the welfare of the Nation in mind, Your Majesty has translated Shakespeare so badly that the mania for works of genius from abroad has been cured – how subtle the way Your Majesty has found to turn the admiration of the public exclusively towards national authors! (...) Oh Sire, go back to the classroom! (109–110)

⁴⁴ António José da Silva Pinto (1848–1911) was an outstanding writer, journalist and a staunch republican. Although his work is vast there is no sign of any special interest in British culture. Silva Pinto maintained a violent debate with Camilo Castelo Branco, despite the fact they were personally on good terms, partly due to their admiration for each other's literary merits.

⁴⁵ While not attaining the same degree of popularity which such publications as the *Revista de Portugal* (Porto, 1889–1892) enjoyed in Portuguese literary circles, the *Revista Literária do Porto* (Porto, 1877), edited by Camilo Castelo Branco, prided itself on more serious literary criticism and hence belonged to the group of more erudite periodicals.

⁴⁶ José Valentim Fialho de Almeida (1857–1911) contributed to several of the periodicals under study, but more frequently to *Os Gatos* (Porto, 1889–1894). A distinguished writer of fiction as well as being the author of numerous political articles, he had a particular interest, as far as English literature was concerned, in the gothic novels of Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe, Byron's poetry and, of course, in translations of Shakespeare.

⁴⁷ Edited by Fialho de Almeida, the periodical *Os Gatos. Publicação Mensal/Semanal de Inquérito à Vida Portuguesa* (Porto, 1889–1894) was, along with *As Farpas* (Lisbon, 1871–1883), devoted to the promotion of a national change of outlook and customs. The periodical carried out a persistent battle against the decadence of institutions and the legislation in force, as well as vigorously denouncing, in uncompromising terms, the miserabilism of Portuguese habits, the backwardness of art and literature, the lack of vision and ambition and the rottenness of society as a whole.

It would require an exhaustive study of D. Luís' Shakespeare translations, based on the different translation theories, to enable firm conclusions to be reached regarding the quality of his work, a task which is beyond the scope of the present paper. It should be remembered, however, that both Silva Pinto and Fialho de Almeida were staunch republicans, so that their political leanings may have led them to write reviews which were not entirely impartial. If this was indeed the case, the target of their criticism was not the translation but its author, the highest representative of the regime they were intent upon overthrowing.

In 1882, José António de Freitas' translation of *Othello* received unanimous praise from the critics on the occasion of its production at the D. Maria II National Theatre. The articles were published in the favourable atmosphere which followed the success of the play, which undoubtedly influenced the views of the authors. In the review which follows, written for the *Jornal do Domingo*⁴⁸ by the translator and playwright Carlos de Moura Cabral,⁴⁹ the author recalls the Portuguese tradition of translating from French rather than directly from English, which made José António de Freitas' work a distinguished exception to the rule. The emphasis, moreover, was on the meaning of the text, while at the same time revealing, in the syntactical correction, the importance of being faithful to the letter of the original, a process which, in itself, was a doubly reflexive act:

When it was revealed that the translation of 'Othello' had been carried out directly from English, many people who were unfamiliar with the translator, remarked:

— From the original English?... rubbish! Obviously, it was translated from the French. And waited for the reaction to come. (...) The tittle-tattle was silenced; those who were used to seeing Dickens, (...) [and] Shakespeare translated from the French were left open-mouthed in surprise.

The translation was prefaced by the translator, and it shows that he did not transpose what was in English straight into Portuguese. He analysed Shakespeare's work carefully, in detail; he studied all of the characters anatomically, every fibre and lump of their bodies, the organism in its entirety, showing at the end, totally and perfectly that he was no machine built merely to find the Portuguese equivalent of a phrase in English. (Cabral 335)⁵⁰

José António de Freitas' translation of *Hamlet* was generously praised by the critics on the occasion of its new production at the D. Maria II Theatre in 1887, which was once again a tremendous success.⁵¹ The magazine *A Avenida*⁵² had already published an article on the production during the period of rehearsals, revealing the author's interest in the choice of actors and scenery but also his concern to draw the attention of regular theatregoers to this new staging of the play:

In this same theatre [D. Maria II] rehearsals are under way for 'Hamlet', adapted to the Portuguese stage by the brilliant writer Sr. José António de Freitas, whose first-class translation of 'Othello' we had the opportunity of applauding, three years ago. José António de Freitas did not just translate Shakespeare's play and adapt it to today's stage, in itself, not an easy task, but carefully studied the main character of the drama, 'Hamlet', one of the strangest and most mysterious of the figures who make up the grandiose gallery of the sublime English playwright. (Ruy [?] 5)

António de Freitas' translations and his adaptations of *Othello* and *Hamlet* seemed to be totally in tune with the taste of the capital's theatregoers. In other reviews of Shakespeare

48 This was an illustrated magazine, published for educational and recreational purposes which was edited by Pinheiro Chagas, who was also its literary editor.

49 Carlos Moura Cabral (1852–1922) also contributed to several contemporary magazines. The performances of his plays at the D. Maria II and Ginásio Theatres were highly successful in his day.

50 See also *Spectator* [Coutinho], "O Othello. II" 282–283.

51 However, the review which preceded Freitas' translation provoked a certain reaction in the press, due to the author's interpretation and analysis of the leading character. In effect, José António de Freitas considered the character of Hamlet to be suffering from neuropathy, causing a lively discussion in which, among others, Pinheiro Chagas, Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, Lobo de Ávila and Sousa Monteiro took part. Urbano de Castro mocked the debate in an article entitled "Topicalities" in the *Jornal de Domingo* (1887, 42).

52 Like *Lisboa Elegante* (Lisbon, 1886–1887), *A Avenida* (Lisbon, 1886–1887) was primarily designed for the entertainment of middle-class women of the capital. Frequently described as an "upmarket" magazine, fashion and social events were essential content in this kind of publication.

translations, especially those of *Othello* written by Luís Ribeiro Sá and *Hamlet* by Bulhão Pato, the critics emphasised the difficulties, first and foremost, of translating the work of a genius, and of translating what often appeared to be untranslatable.⁵³ In fact, irrespective of whether the reviewers considered the translations were of a high standard or not, Shakespeare's geniality was always praised.

4. REVIEWS OF PERFORMANCES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS ON THE PORTUGUESE STAGE

Two groups of articles are of fundamental importance in this category: firstly, reviews of the productions of Shakespeare's plays by the company of the celebrated Italian actor Ernesto Rossi (1829–1896), who performed in Portugal on two separate occasions, during 1868/69 and 1884/85; and secondly, a group of articles published at the end of 1882 and at the beginning of 1887, on the occasion of the opening nights of the plays *Othello* and *Hamlet* performed by Portuguese actors at the D. Maria II Theatre, according to José António de Freitas' previously-mentioned versions.

4.1. REVIEWS OF THE ERNESTO ROSSI COMPANY'S PRODUCTIONS

By the eighteen-fifties, the Italian actor Ernesto Rossi was already famous around the whole of Europe for his productions of the works of Shakespeare, having performed in the capitals of Italy, France, Germany, Spain and Russia, to universal applause.⁵⁴ Rossi's success abroad led José Maria Pereira Rodrigues, writing in the *Crónica dos Teatros* in 1866, to propose to the Portuguese Government⁵⁵ that Rossi and his company should give ten performances of Shakespeare's plays at the D. Maria II Theatre, a proposal which was immediately accepted.⁵⁶ It would only be two years later, however, in 1868, that Rossi's company would finally perform in Lisbon, on the stage of the Príncipe Real Theatre.⁵⁷

According to the writers in the periodicals, the warm reception of Rossi's company in Portugal was due to several factors: the greatness of Shakespeare's writing, the Italian actor's talent and the fact that the characters and plot were already familiar to the Portuguese public, primarily due to earlier operatic productions. It should also be remembered that news of Rossi's success abroad in Shakespeare's plays had already reached Portuguese theatregoers, who were therefore looking forward to attending a performance which, from the outset, promised to be exceptional. Even the posters announcing Rossi's arrival in Portugal brought excitement to the city of Lisbon, and the high expectations of the theatregoing public were not to be disappointed. In the *Jornal das Damas*,⁵⁸ for example, Júlio César Machado described Ernesto Rossi's arrival in the capital, adding his comments on the Italian actor's opening performance in the role of *Othello*. His article was couched in terms which conveyed his appreciation of Aristotelian posture—"astonishment and terror"—and his enchantment with the audience's melodramatic response to the careful staging of the more violent episodes, a strategy also demanded by the structure of the tragedy itself:

53 See, for example Barreto, "Amostras de uma Tradução" 89; and "Bibliografia. 'Hamlet'" 80.

54 Regarding Rossi's reputation in Europe and the importance of his presence in Portugal see Flor, "Shakespeare, Rosas & Brazão" 236.

55 Both the *Revista Teatral* (Lisbon, 1885) and the *Crónica dos Teatros* (Lisbon, 1865–1880) were designed to inform theatregoers. The *Crónica* stands out, however, because of its longevity: it was published for nineteen years.

56 See "Teatro do Príncipe Real" 1–2.

57 According to Maria João da Rocha Afonso, the first contact of the Portuguese theatregoers with the play *Othello* (excluding Rossini's adaptation for the opera *Otello*, which opened at the S. Carlos Opera House in 1820) was at the Salitre Theatre, in 1822. Performed by a French company, the play was based on Jean-François Ducis' version, *Othello ou le more de Venise*. In 1834, a Portuguese version of Ducis' adaptation, possibly by José de Sousa Bandeira, was performed at the S. João Theatre in Porto and in 1835, at private performances in Guimarães, where it appears to have obtained a great success ("*Othello Estreia-se*" 125).

58 Among magazines of its kind—those primarily designed to appeal to middle-class women like *Lisboa Elegante* and *A Avenida*—the *Jornal das Damas* (Lisbon, 1867–1879) was probably the most popular, being advertised in all of the others. Emulating French women's magazines and even reproducing articles from Parisian periodicals the *Jornal das Damas* endeavoured to convey the atmosphere of the French capital, providing middle-class women readers with entertainment and the pleasure of fantasy in their moments of leisure.

Othello disembarked at the Terreiro do Paço, continued his journey via Rossio (...) and is now at the Príncipe Real Theatre. (...) Everyone was amazed to find that they understood his Italian better than they did the speech of many of our fellow countrymen. There are two reasons for this: the first is that everything in him speaks – gesture, facial expression, his eyes; the second is due to the choice of plays which depend not merely upon analysis and style, but tragedies and dramas where the beauty of the details is one with the clarity of the plot – as they generally are in the work of Shakespeare and in all the plays written by great masters – so that they are as easy to understand as pantomimes. (...) On the following day Rossi performed ‘Othello’. The theatre was crowded and there was an atmosphere of great excitement and curiosity. (...) the commotion in the audience was extraordinary. Ladies were in tears in the box seats and in the stalls, men turned pale. No one failed to follow the high poetry of this grandiose drama; (...) for the plot is so designed that it is impossible not to understand; (...) It is not revealed on stage that the moor, out of jealousy, has killed Desdemona, no, the audience actually witnesses the tragedy, they see the tiger’s claws twisting on the pillow, the curtains shaking, the raven hair of the victim shining against the dazzling whiteness of the sheets... Rossi was unsurpassable. (...) the whole audience trembled with amazement and terror. (Machado, “Crónica Teatral” 6)⁵⁹

However, of all Ernesto Rossi’s productions, the one which appears to have impressed Portuguese audiences the most was *Hamlet*, which had made him famous on the European stages and was performed for the first time in Portugal in 1868. The journalist and playwright Ferreira de Mesquita⁶⁰ wrote of the collective euphoria on the occasion of the long-awaited opening performance at the Príncipe Real Theatre, which was advertised as a tribute to the famous Italian actor. Rossi, who played the role of Shakespeare’s extraordinary and complex leading character, shared the stage with Portuguese actors such as Emília das Neves and Emília Adelaide, among others.⁶¹ As far as Rossi’s performance was concerned, the critic left no doubts about his opinion—it was a masterly play by a universal genius, which had been performed sublimely:

Hamlet is the giant around whom all the other characters are arrayed, so that we will confine our comments to him. Shakespeare’s admirable creation was admirably performed by Ernesto Rossi. If the poet, whose ashes have been removed by two and a half centuries of the ploughshare, could resuscitate, he would witness, with pleasure, a magnificent performance of a role full of difficulties. In the figure of Hamlet there is a constant struggle between contradictory affections; repressed and dominated passions; atrocious doubt, insupportable dissimulation, permanent disquiet, the painful mourning which relentlessly torments the Prince of Denmark, all these form a mixture of feelings which are as difficult to describe, as is the task of performing them. Ernesto Rossi has a perfect understanding of the terrible situations engendered in this model of tragedy, in which Shakespeare gives us the horror of the icy reality of the story of life, from which he pitilessly tears out the pleasant illusions of the soul, one by one. That masterly monologue from Act 2 “To be or not to be; that is the question” was spoken with unsurpassable veracity. Rossi, in this Act, seems to soar to a higher place, leaving the Earth behind, and there receives the inspiration which comes from above (...). In the scene at the graveyard, when Hamlet contemplates Yorick’s skull, he becomes emotional and descends to Earth – “Poor Yorick!” – These two words and those which follow, charged with the expression given to them by the actor, enclose within them a whirlwind of ideas which flood through the mind of the character. An admirable, admirable performance! (Mesquita 4)⁶²

The publicity surrounding Shakespeare’s tragedy caused by Ernesto Rossi’s magnificent performance in the role of Hamlet may explain why it was the most-often translated of the

59 See also “Teatro do Príncipe Real” 2–3; Machado, “Rossi em Lisboa” 1–2; “Companhia Dramática Italiana” 5; and “As Nossas Gravuras. O Entero” 339.

60 This was Augusto César Ferreira de Mesquita (1841–1912), who, in addition to being a member of the Parliament of the day, contributed to different contemporary periodicals, wrote several works for the stage and translated many others.

61 See Mesquita, “Teatro do Príncipe Real” 3.

62 See also “Rossi” 7.

playwright's plays in Portugal during the period. It is worth recalling that, as far as we know, the published translations of excerpts from the tragedy all came later than the first performances of the play in Portugal (the season of 1868/69). These translations were published only two years after Rossi's apotheotic reception, that is, in 1870 and 1871. It is also significant that the passages signed by Ferreira de Mesquita—the monologue “to be or not to be” and the graveyard scene—were precisely those which were translated for the first time. It is fair to say, therefore, that Rossi triggered off a renewal of public interest in Shakespeare to which the publication of translations of excerpts from his plays bears eloquent witness.

The reviews which appeared on the occasion of Rossi's first visit to Portugal recognised that the actor was a faithful interpreter of the feelings behind the words of the playwright. According to the writers, Rossi was not merely a superb actor who won over Portuguese theatregoers but also a profound connoisseur of Shakespeare's ideas, his hidden sentiments and his essential message.⁶³

Ernesto Rossi's second visit to Portugal, in 1884/85, differed from the first, not just as regards the venue of the plays—the Ginásio Theatre, instead of the Príncipe Real⁶⁴—but also due to the presentation of another of Shakespeare's tragedies which was not included in the 1868/69 tour, *King Lear*. However, contrary to the earlier reviews of *Othello* and *Hamlet*, Rossi's acting in *King Lear* was considered to be superior in quality to the Elizabethan dramatist's text, which the critics thought too “long and dull” (“Crónica dos Teatros. Ginásio” 351). During the period in question, periodicals such as *A Ilustração de Portugal e Brasil*⁶⁵ or the *Jornal do Domingo* published several engravings showing scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* (Figure 3), *Macbeth* (Figure 4) and *Hamlet* (Figure 5). The publication of such illustrations was indicative of the preference of such magazines for lighter, recreational entertainment, while also revealing, perhaps, that the plots of these plays were already popular among the readers of these periodicals.



Figure 3 (“As Nossas Gravuras. Romeu e Julieta” 117).

63 See Barreto, “Amstras de uma Tradução” 89–90.

64 See “Teatros e Circos. Ginásio” [2].

65 The successor to the Spanish magazine *Ilustración Ibérica*, which was so popular in Portugal, *A Ilustração de Portugal e Brasil* (Lisbon, 1885) was among the best-illustrated periodicals of its day, standing out from the rest because of the quality of its prints. In fact, the illustrations were, at times, so predominant that the text of the magazine was made up of little more than the captions describing the prints.



Figure 4 (“As Nossas Gravuras. Macbeth” 196).



Figure 5 (“As Nossas Gravuras. Teatro de Shakespeare” 24–25).

Hence, the main interest of Rossi’s reviews, rather than in the praise for his performances, lies in the fact that they reveal his important contribution to making the work of Shakespeare more widely known by showing Portuguese theatregoers how to appreciate the work and genius of the great playwright.

4.2. REVIEWS OF PERFORMANCES OF JOSÉ ANTÓNIO DE FREITAS’ VERSIONS FOR THE STAGE

It is remarkable, perhaps, that although there were twenty-five performances of *Othello* at the D. Maria II theatre in the 1882/83 season, it was only in the final months of 1882 that

reviews of José António de Freitas' versions of Shakespeare's tragedies began to appear in the periodicals under study.

News of the production appeared even before the opening performance, however, emphasising the curiosity and excitement of theatregoers regarding this new version of Shakespeare's play. Moreover, the production was considered a significant step towards raising the standard of the repertoire of the National Theatre. The comments demonstrate that appreciation for the playwright's work was growing during the period, both among the theatre-going public and also among theatre critics. Indeed, according to information gathered from the periodicals, a performance of Shakespeare, in 1882, was unquestionably a noteworthy cultural event:

The D. Maria Theatre is preparing a great artistic occasion (...) – a production of “Othello”. (...) the D. Maria production (...) will bring Shakespeare's play to the stage with all the care and perfection it deserves. The play is being produced in the actor Brasão's honour, as it is he who will face the colossal challenge of performing the imposing role of Othello. Theatregoers are in a state of curiosity about this “first performance”, which provides confirmation that the D. Maria is doing its utmost to raise the literary level of the Portuguese theatre. (Lobato, “Crónica Ocidental” 258)⁶⁶

Both the public and the critics, in general, were enthusiastic about the performances of the Portuguese actors, while recognising, at the same time, the quality of the D. Maria II Theatre's production. As mentioned previously, Gervásio Lobato,⁶⁷ for example, began by praising José António de Freitas' version, and expressed his satisfaction regarding the overall quality of the acting and, in particular, the performances of Portuguese actors. In a long article in *O Ocidente*, Lobato informed his readers that Eduardo Brasão had prepared the role with great care, having travelled to London with the express intention of seeing Shakespeare performed by the “modern English school”, which left an excellent impression.⁶⁸ The following are a few extracts from the article:

The success of Shakespeare's play was huge, all the more because it was unexpected, and a source of even greater satisfaction to the actors, who were not used to the challenge of Shakespearean characters and were somewhat daunted by the prospect (...).

The audience was extremely just and intelligent in its applause. All the great moments of “Othello” were accompanied by ovations and thanks to the quality of the acting, none went unapplauded.

Brasão (...) was a fine and distinguished Othello, at once vigorous and pathetic, avoiding the pitfall that so many have fallen into – the confusion of strength with violence, (...) and, moreover, he was a conscientious Shakespearean, seldom failing to exploit the literary beauty of his fearsome role to the full. João Rosa was a magnificent Iago (...). Virgínia was delicate and tender (...). Falco spoke his part clearly (...). Augusto Rosa was an excellent Cassio, fine and brilliant.

(...) and all the actors gave their discreet contributions towards the success of the play. In short, Shakespeare won over the city and there can be no doubt (...) that our actors are capable of handling the most demanding of repertoires with dignity. (...)

“Othello” at the D. Maria Theatre was one of the greatest triumphs of the last few years on the Portuguese stage, as recognised both by the Ministry of the Realm (...) and (...) by theatregoers, who have filled the Theatre every night and made every performance of “Othello” a success both for the theatre and for the leading actors of Shakespeare's tragedy. (Spectator [Coutinho] 266)⁶⁹

66 See also Cabral, “Livros e Teatros” 334–335.

67 Gervásio Jorge Gonçalves Lobato (1850–1895) was the literary director and leader writer (“Crónica Ocidental”) for *O Ocidente*, having also written for many other periodicals. Several of his literary activities may be related to an interest in Shakespeare. For a start, Gervásio Lobato was a playwright, being best-known for comedies and farces. His productions, originals as well as translations and imitations, were performed on the Lisbon stage, mainly at the Ginásio Theatre, with considerable success. His theatre writing and his intense activity as a theatre critic is almost certainly the reason for his interest in Shakespeare's plays, their performances in Portugal and his reviews of their adaptations for opera at the S. Carlos Opera House.

68 Regarding the performances of Eduardo Brasão and the other actors in the Rosas & Brasão Theatre Company, see Flor, “Shakespeare, Rosas & Brazão” 233–246.

69 See also Lobato, “Crónica Ocidental” 266.

Corresponding ever more closely to public taste, the performances of Shakespeare were also considered a yardstick to gauge the quality of the Portuguese actors.

The reaction of the critics to *Hamlet*, at the D. Maria II in 1887, was identical. Reviews in periodicals such as *O Ocidente*, *A Gazeta dos Teatros*, *O Recreio*,⁷⁰ *O Mundo Elegante*⁷¹ or *Lisboa Elegante* were unanimous in considering that it had been a triumph, describing the occasion as “one of the most glorious dates in the history of Portuguese dramatic art” (Lobato, “Crónica Ocidental” 18) and adding that it was an excellent adaptation by José António de Freitas, with magnificent staging, a splendid wardrobe and brilliant performances by Eduardo Brasão (Hamlet), Rosa Damasceno (Ophelia) and the remaining cast. In short, the greatest triumph of the Portuguese stage in its day:

This colossus of Shakespeare’s world [Hamlet] has just appeared on the Portuguese stage for the first time, to the glory of our art and to the glory of this powerful actor [Eduardo Brasão] whose talent is equal to his ambition, and who, daring to match himself in a struggle against this fearsome character who encapsulates all that is most challenging, most sublime and most grandiose in the art of the stage, (...) triumphed completely (...).

I know of no such dazzling triumph on the Portuguese stage in our time (Lobato, “Crónica Ocidental” 18)⁷²

Hamlet’s existential doubts—uncertainty, hesitation, constant self-questioning as to what was real or true about death, happiness or love—seem to have corresponded perfectly to the spirit of the times, personified, as they were in the play, by this enigmatic but fascinating figure, whose moods swung constantly between feelings of doubt and melancholy, hate, or desire for vengeance, and who, while not being exactly mad himself, spoke to ghosts and skulls and drove his loved one out of her mind. It was a mixture of ingredients which impassioned both theatregoers and critics. Consequently, *Hamlet* in 1887 not only represents a landmark in the history of Shakespeare performances in Portugal, but also a high point as regards the reception of the great dramatist’s work.

5. REVIEWS OF OPERAS PRESENTED AT THE S. CARLOS OPERA HOUSE

During the second half of the nineteenth century, it was not just the theatrical productions of Shakespeare which contributed towards the enthusiastic reception of the playwright in Portugal; adaptations of the plays for the operatic stage at the S. Carlos Opera House also played an important role. This section deals with the reviews of such productions in the periodicals under study.

The greater part of the opera reviews was of the S. Carlos productions of the Shakespeare tragedies *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. Commenting on Ambroise Thomas’ production of *Hamlet* at the S. Carlos Opera House in the 1885/86 season, the critics praised the music and the performances of the singers, while adding nothing new concerning Shakespeare’s original version, nor its adaptation as an opera libretto. The French composer’s score, for example, and the performance of Fides Devriés, the Dutch-American *prima-donna*, in the role of Ophelia, both received the highest praise, whereas very little was said about Shakespeare’s plot, which was relegated to comparative insignificance behind the music, the staging, the performance of the singers and even the details of their careers.⁷³ The same occurred in 1890 when the opera returned to the stage of the S. Carlos, this time with the famous American soprano Marie Van-

70 Directed more specifically towards children, *O Recreio. Publicação/Revista Semanal, Literária e Charadística* (Lisbon, 1885–1899) was, however, read by their mothers, hence performing an educational and recreational service to women.

71 With middle-class women in mind, *O Mundo Elegante. Mensageiro Semanal Ilustrado de Modas, Elegância e Bom-Tom Dedicado às Senhoras Portuguesas e Brasileiras* (Paris/Lisbon, 1887) specialised in social gossip and Parisian fashion.

72 See also “Eco das Plateias” [3]; “Pelos Teatros. D. Maria” 3; Rodrigues, “Crónica” 369; Almagiva [?], “Teatros e Salas. *Hamlet*” 7; Gonçalves, “Da Plateia. *Hamlet*” 391–393; and Lobato, “Teatros” 117–120.

73 See, as examples, the following articles: Alves, “Crónica Teatral” 13; Délio [?], “S. Carlos” 82; and J.N., “Teatros. S. Carlos. *Hamlet*” 173.

Zandt in the role of Ophelia. Van-Zandt was the principal focus of interest for operagoers, and it was quite natural, therefore, for the critics to concentrate their remarks on her performance. Indeed, at the same time as praising the orchestra and comparing the performances of the two great sopranos Fides Devriés and Van-Zandt, Shakespeare's work was virtually ignored.⁷⁴

Jaime de Séguier's⁷⁵ review of the performance of Giuseppe Kaschmann as Hamlet in Ambroise Thomas' production at the S. Carlos in 1881, was, therefore, something of an exception. In his commentary on the performance of the Austrian-Italian baritone, who was already widely-known for his interpretation of Hamlet, Séguier displays a familiarity with Shakespeare's character, possibly based on his reading of translations or previous theatrical performances. In fact, irrespective of whether they are fair or appropriate, Jaime de Séguier's remarks are of particular interest precisely because they show an awareness of the importance of Shakespeare's text as adapted for the opera, unlike the majority of the reviews. The following passage, in addition to providing evidence of the above, also reveals the writer's fine sense of humour:

It is customary to say that Mr. Kaschmann understands the character of Hamlet perfectly. In my view, Mr. Kaschmann falsified the real meaning of this artistic creation and, instead of an exceptional human being, dilacerated by extraordinary passions, but alive and real in every way, he gave us an insignificant character with sentimental attitudes, frizzy hair and a fixed stare, who speaks clearly most of the time, but in compensation performs certain scenes detestably. It is unacceptable for Hamlet to encounter his father's ghost, knowing perfectly well who he is, (...) draw his sword in fury and inveigh against the spectre as if he were doing so against the first unknown spook (...) who popped up from behind a ruin.

In Act III, when the sombre phantom appears once again to stop him from murdering his mother, why does he start running like a madman until he trips up against a pew? Only someone who had never even read the clumsiest translation of the tragedy, could fail to see that Hamlet, on encountering his father's ghost, shows no fear whatsoever, but rather tender respect, a melancholic mildness which reveals itself in the first words that he utters: "Alas, dear phantom" ... (Séguier 337–338)

However, although it is true that Hamlet does not show great fear when he first lays eyes on his father's ghost, the expression "melancholy mildness" is a questionable description of his state of mind on this, his first encounter with the spectre, which he calls "poor ghost" (*apud* Alexander 1036).

The reviews of Rossini's opera *Otello*, which was presented at the S. Carlos Opera House in the 1865/66 season, focussed entirely on the Italian mezzo-soprano Adelaide Borghi-Mamo,⁷⁶ while a generation later, the articles on Verdi's *Otello* at the S. Carlos in 1889 were in a similar vein, though revealing greater enthusiasm. The critics were enchanted by Verdi's music, which though "interpreting the words faithfully – one of the most impressive qualities of the whole opera" (Lobato, "Crónica Ocidental" 74), clearly overshadowed Shakespeare's text. Arrigo Boito's libretto, which was described as "one of the most remarkable of its kind to be found in Italian opera" (Lobato, "Crónica Ocidental" 74), also received great praise, despite significant alterations to Shakespeare's plot, notably the amputation of certain scenes, which, in an opera with Verdi's extraordinary music was considered of little importance. The writers were also impressed by the performances of the choir, the duets and particularly by the soloists, the soprano and *prima-donna* Eva Tétrazzini, in the role of Desdemona, the baritone Mattia Battistini as Iago, and the tenor Augusto Brogi as Othello.⁷⁷ Indeed, in the opinion of the authors of the magazine articles, rather than Shakespeare's creation, the opera *Othello* was a "splendid example of Verdi's art" (Lobato, "Crónica Ocidental" 266).

The commentaries on Verdi's opera *Macbeth*, which were published shortly before its opening performance at the S. Carlos in 1866, diverged from these assessments. A brief study on

74 See, for instance, Lobato, "Crónica Ocidental" 26; and A.M.[?] "Revista Lírica. S. Carlos" 2.

75 A contributor to several different periodicals, Jaime Amorim de Sieuve de Séguier (1860–1932) was responsible for the theatre reviews in the *Jornal do Domingo*. His vast literary production included the translation and adaptation of several plays as well as opera librettos.

76 See "Real Teatro" 2, an article which quotes several reviews published in the Lisbon press.

77 See Soffredini [?], "Teatros de Lisboa" 23; "Miscelânea" 86; and "Othello. Ópera" 166–167.

what was described as “Shakespeare’s most daring creation” (“*Real Teatro*” 1) was published in the *Crónica dos Teatros*⁷⁸ to help readers and operagoers understand and appreciate Verdi’s adaptation of *Macbeth*. Unlike in the previous articles, however, Shakespeare was not overshadowed by Verdi, as the following excerpt shows:

It is impossible to speak of this opera [*Macbeth*] without recalling Shakespeare’s name. It is a name which stands out above everything else: there is no musical composer who can make one forget it. In everything which bears his name he will always be first and his glory will overshadow everyone. (...).

Of all these [plays], (...) perhaps the most perfect is “*Macbeth*”. In no other was the poet more unerring; in no other did his muse soar so high. It would be necessary to be a Shakespeare in music to be able to transport the poetry of Shakespeare to this divine art form. (...) We know of no other musical geniuses who would have the audacity to attempt this feat except three of the most esteemed contemporary composers: Rossini, Bellini and Verdi. (“*Real Teatro*” 1–2)

The anonymous author then devoted the rest of his article to a comparison between the operatic version and Shakespeare’s original play, identifying the moments where he felt that the musical transposition had best been carried out and, in contrast, those where neither the score nor the libretto had succeeded in capturing Shakespeare’s sensitivity, imagination or, in a word, his magnificence. To exemplify the composer’s failings, the author pointed out how the witches—whom he describes as “those agents of death and disgrace, representing the terrifying, not the burlesque”—had been interpreted by the famous Italian composer: “Verdi (...) failed (...), the music (...) he wrote for the witches seems to lack much of the terrifying, repugnant and mysterious atmosphere which it ought to convey, while adding later that the libretto was “unworthy of the tragedy’s merits” (“*Real Teatro*” 1–2). However, among the moments which Verdi had portrayed successfully, in the author’s view, were the murder scene in Act II Scenes I and II in Shakespeare’s original, and the sleepwalking scene in Act V Scene I.⁷⁹

With their appeal to the taste of the bourgeois public of the day, Shakespearean operas undoubtedly played an important role in the reception of the playwright in Portugal, as the reviews of performances in contemporary magazines offered an alternative way of publicising the author’s work and of making his characters and themes better known, as a form of appropriation of a culture which it is intended to publicise and which, at the same time, is recognised by readers consolidating Shakespeare’s reputation as a universal, immortal genius.

6. SHAKESPEAREAN CHARACTERS AND THEMES

Three previously unknown translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets were published in the periodicals under study, in articles and commentaries on the playwright’s characters and themes. These were the translations of sonnet 14, by Cândido de Figueiredo, which was published in 1869 in *A Folha*⁸⁰ and two parts of sonnets 71 and 95, by Camilo Castelo Branco, which appeared in 1886 in a review of the translation of *Othello*, by the King of Portugal, D. Luís (“*Secção Literária*, 3), an article which was examined in section 3.

Generally speaking, the authors of magazine articles based their analysis of Shakespearean characters on the intimate relationship between his characters (above all, the leading characters) and his principal themes. In the opinion of the Portuguese critics, Shakespeare’s universal appeal was due to the themes of his plays with which most of his principal characters were closely associated. Hence the articles either analysed the characters who personified Shakespeare’s universal themes or, alternatively, while commenting on the thematic content of the plays, the authors singled out certain Shakespearean characters as examples. Moreover,

⁷⁸ Published with the aim of educating or at least guiding public taste through reviews of plays, operas or other spectacles, the periodical *Crónica dos Teatros* (Lisbon, 1861–1880), edited by Eduardo Coelho, was fortunate in having contributors of renown, which may explain its longevity.

⁷⁹ See “*Real Teatro*” 2. After the opening performance, all the other reviews of Verdi’s opera *Macbeth* were couched in identical terms to this preliminary study.

⁸⁰ See Figueiredo, “*Prognóstico. (De Shakespeare)*” 107.

an aspect which is often mentioned in such reflections is the playwright's perennial relevance and appeal. By personifying universal dramas, Shakespeare's characters were always relevant to the present day. Consequently, Hamlet's doubts, Romeo and Juliet's romance, and Othello's jealousy were the favourite themes of the periodical writers.

6.1. HAMLET'S DOUBT

Of all Shakespeare's characters, Hamlet was unquestionably the one who excited the greatest interest among the writers. As previously mentioned, Hamlet was the personification of existential doubt, represented by the famous phrase "to be or not to be, that is the question":

When all is said and done, "Hamlet" is a melancholic figure (...). Always hesitant, he consults the spectre of his father, desires for vengeance but lacks strength until the final moment, and when he emerges from his permanent state of doubt it is merely to enter one of blind fury. (...) when the storm has done its worst to his soul – doubt appears, (...) doubt that humanity, always sanguine always sure of itself, has never experienced. ("As Nossas Gravuras. Shakespeare" 22)⁸¹

The theme of *Hamlet*, as well as the character who personifies it, are the two aspects of the play which the critics refer to whenever they wish to emphasise Shakespeare's topicality. In an era in which scientific discovery and the spread of Positivism were threatening faith and religious belief, Hamlet's existential doubt seemed to correspond to the spirit of the times, prioritising the minuteness of common discomforts over the order of things, spreading out like a wave to affect the deepest concerns of an ethical and religious nature, as Heliodoro Salgado⁸² pointed out:

The phrase ["to be or not to be"] which (...) surged from Hamlet' desolate heart may be seen as the synthesis of all doubt, of the battle between science and emotions, that gigantic, centuries-old struggle, in which spirits beat like the waves of the tormented sea against the rocks darkened by the weeds and sun (...).

The disbeliever, the free thinker, the materialist – how often does he not feel that sudden doubt appears in the mind he thought freed from religious sentimentality, that old feeling he thought dead but which – the bastard! – he had only put to sleep, and imposing upon it the deductions of experimentalism, perhaps even those of reason; then he (...) with eyes set upon the infinite, his hand pressed against his wounded breast, he repeats once again: "to be, or not to be"! (5)⁸³

The same Shakespeare play provided the inspiration for José de Sousa Monteiro⁸⁴ to write a sonnet which recalls the dramatic moment in which Ophelia, driven mad by Hamlet's rejection and by the death of her father, dies by drowning. In this case, the mark of romanticism is clearly present in the identification of Ophelia's oneness with Nature, which embraces her:

Que doce olhar de lucida safira!
Dorme-lhe o lago aos pés calmo, gemente.
Em seu tranquilo espelho amiga frente
a admira absorta, se ela absorta admira.

Riem-lhe da água, – docemente rira.
Estende as mãos, as mãos lhe estendem. Sente
tremer na água um suspiro, se suspira
Quer estreita-la ao seio eternamente...

Resvala e cai. Acorrem as ondinas
a transmudar-lhe as formas peregrinas
no soberbo dos largos nenúfares.

81 See also Barreto, "Ensaio de Pré-história" 117–118; Branco, "Secção Literária" 3; and Chaves, "A Arte Antiga" 353.

82 Regular contributor and journalist to several republican periodicals Heliodoro Salgado (1861–1906) carried out several violent campaigns against Government institutions.

83 See also Gonçalves, "Da Plateia. *Hamlet*" 373–374.

84 José de Sousa Monteiro (1846–1909) was a distinguished poet and dramatist.

Na harpa da noite ulula o seu lamento...
As estrelas no azul do firmamento
fulgem de noite seus mortais olhares...⁸⁵ (50)

Notwithstanding the melancholy tone of the poem and its tragic theme—suicide—which undoubtedly corresponded to the intensely romantic literary taste of its female readership, the sonnet was published in the “Literature and Fine Arts” section of an ostensibly erudite periodical, *O Instituto*,⁸⁶ perhaps because its author was considered at the time to be a major poet, a status which he failed to retain until our own day.

6.2. ROMEO AND JULIET’S LOVE AND OTHELLO’S JEALOUSY

Despite the fact that *Romeo and Juliet* was performed on both the theatre stage and at the S. Carlos Opera House, the references in the periodicals to the productions were cursory, as mentioned previously. However, when the purpose of the article was to analyse the theme of the play or its principal characters, the commentaries were more elaborate, especially in the case of this play, in which Shakespeare’s supposed romanticism was more readily apparent to the authors than in any other. In the opinion of Eduardo Augusto Vidal, an author who was clearly influenced by romanticism, and whose perspective is patently obvious from the following excerpt, both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* display Shakespeare’s romanticism in his treatment of the theme of love—the candour, purity, authenticity and tenderness which unite Romeo and Juliet; the insatiable passion and jealousy which leave Othello disoriented:

All that is natural is simple (...). The fields are filled with garlands of flowers when nature’s warmth draws the sap up from the ground, the poet rises when the fire of passion fills his veins. His verses follow, the flowers blossom, all of this is natural and beautiful...

Open “Romeo and Juliet”, the poem of love’s effusion, read the garden scene, the fifth scene of the third act; that scent of roses, that murmur of kisses, how nostalgic the early days of May!

(...) How one’s soul is touched by all this beauty, how moving it all is, how one’s tears moisten the pages where these two gracious figures lie embraced.

(...) There is no other book with a scene, a passage which can compare with Romeo and Juliet’s farewell. (“Album. Hamlet (Brazão)” 71)

Later in the same article, however, Vidal surpasses his Hadean view, while writing of Othello’s passion and jealousy, evoking Act V Scene II of the play:

In “Othello” it is the opposite of this scene of love [between Romeo and Juliet]; everything has changed. No more does the lark sing amongst the pomegranates, nor does the sunrise appear over the horizon. It is night, darkest night, from the heavens down to the negro’s face. (...) The horror of impending catastrophe is there in Othello’s halting steps, in the darkness he spreads around himself, in the floating words he speaks. The confused jealousy, the intimate rage, the concentration of every ounce of the soul’s strength into a single desire for vengeance, all these resist against the angel of love (...). Desdemona (...) innocent and sincere (...) runs to the arms of the one who will soon hold her in the embrace of death. (71)

⁸⁵ “How sweet that gaze of lucid sapphire! / Below, the lake sleeps calm, yet sighs, / Whilst in its mirror, absorbed, a friend admires / a friend, admirably absorbed // From the water gentle laughter comes, / Gently she reaches out, the hands reach back / Feeling a sigh tremble in the water, she yearns / to hold her tight against her breast for ever ... // She slips and falls. The ripples rush to transform / Her errant form amongst the beauty / Of the spreading water lilies // The harp of night cries its lament... / Set in the azure of the firmament, the stars / Glow in the darkness with their deadly gaze...”

⁸⁶ Directed towards a restricted audience and having the declared aim of discussing scientific and literary subjects, *O Instituto* (Coimbra, 1852–1981)—and the association which was responsible for its publication—had links to the prestigious teaching staff of Coimbra University, as well as to distinguish foreign personalities. Due to the undeniable quality of its articles and its longevity, *O Instituto* was recognised as a repository of knowledge throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

Júlio César Machado,⁸⁷ who also quotes Act I Scenes I and V of the play in an article published in *O Jornal das Damas*, was of the opinion that Romeo and Juliet personified the ideal of romantic love—pure, tender, spontaneous, without barriers, irrational, melancholic, sickly and morbid, heralding a tragic end:

“Romeo e Julieta” is, *par excellence*, the drama of love, its epitome, its final note (...)
After the ball, Romeo runs to Juliet’s terrace and the hurried love declaration at the feast becomes a cry of passion. It is as if the presentiment of death, the melancholic moonlight and the evening scent were conspiring together to hasten their love.
 (“Romeu e Julieta” 8–9)

The lovers’ meeting, in Act I Scene V of the drama, also inspired Olavo Bilac⁸⁸ to compose a poem entitled “Romeo’s Song”, which appeared in *A Ilustração Portuguesa*, in which the lyrical self sings of his love, associating the spiritual ideal to carnal passion. The following are a few of the verses:

Abre a janela... acorda!
Que eu, só por te acordar,
Vou pulsando a guitarra, corda a corda,
Ao luar (...)

Solta os cabelos cheios
De aroma: e semi-nus
Surjam formosos, trémulos, teus seios
À luz (...)

Vem, que esta voz secreta
É o canto de Romeu:
Acorda! Quem te chama, Julieta,
Sou eu!⁸⁹ (118)

The moment in which Romeo appears on the balcony of her room was recalled by Abílio Maia in a poem entitled “*Esperando em Vão*” (“Waiting in Vain”). The first verse reads as follows: “Entre o brado murmúrio do arvoredo / Do noturno luar todo inundado / Ela espera ansiando e em segredo / O lânguido Romeo apaixonado”⁹⁰ (67). Above all, the somewhat simplified adaptations of the two famous Shakespearean characters and the tragic love scene provided a pretext for the Portuguese poets to address the theme of love.

The character of Romeo also inspired a sonnet by José de Sampaio e Castro, with the same title, which was dedicated to a friend, Bernardino da Costa Leite, who may have committed suicide. In this case, the correspondence between the poem and a scene from the play is not so apparent, although the characteristics of Romeo would seem to identify with those of the person who is evoked in the poem, possibly the one to whom it is dedicated. The first and last verses read as follows:

Havia em seu olhar sereno, bom, ardente
A vaga inspiração dos nobres paladinos;
Sentia na su’alma, em extasis divinos,
A luz d’um novo sol – o amor – o astro ingente. (...)
Mas ensombrou-lhe a mente o preconceito, o mundo!
No entanto vai gozando o sono bem profundo
Na mesma sepultura ao pé de Julieta⁹¹ (123)

87 Júlio César da Costa Machado (1835–1890) was one of the most respected short story writers of his generation, having contributed to several different periodicals. He published *Recordações de Paris e Londres* (1862), after a journey to these two capitals.

88 Brazilian journalist, writer of fiction and poet Olavo Brás Martins dos Guimarães Bilac (1865–1918) was termed the “Prince of Brazilian Poets” in his day.

89 “Open the window... awake! / For I, just to waken you / Will play the guitar, string by string, / In the moonlight (...) // Let down your perfumed hair / over your fair, trembling breasts / half revealed / In the light (...) // Come, this secret voice / Is Romeo’s: / Awaken! He who calls you, Juliet, / Is I!”

90 “Amongst the whispering trees / lit by the moonlight / She awaits, longing secretly / for the impassioned Romeo.”

91 “There was in his serene, kindly, burning look / Something of the noble paladin; / In his soul you felt, in divine extasy, / The warmth of a new sun – love – the giant star. (...) / But prejudice cast a shadow on his brow, the world! / And now he rests in deepest slumber / In the same grave at Juliet’s side.”

In this case, the aim of appropriation was to find a pretext to publish a funeral elegy to a friend while, at the same time, criticising the social prejudices of the day, which had led to his suicide.

Thus, the exploitation of Shakespearean characters and themes should be understood as a form of appropriation of a culture which it is intended to publicise and, at the same time, is recognised by readers. On the other hand, especially in the case of minor authors, such appropriation offered a pretext for their own literary creation and a trampoline for their recognition as writers.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

As far as Portuguese periodicals in the second half of the nineteenth century were concerned, the outstanding aesthetic and literary model among British authors and their work was undoubtedly William Shakespeare, who was already considered a universal genius. Although Shakespeare became both the model and the source for the whole idea of European Romanticism at the time of the “1870 Generation”,⁹² the mythical image of the romantic author and its association with Shakespeare was propagated not so much by the authors of this generation, but by writers with different ideas such as Camilo Castelo Branco, Eduardo Augusto Vidal, Pinheiro Chagas, Fialho de Almeida, Gervásio Lobato, or other less well-known members of the cultural scene in the final decades of the century.

This may be explained by the fact that the still youthful members of the “1870 Generation” were deeply influenced by Positivism and the defence of realism in literature and art. Another more obvious explanation may be found in the type of publications in which the vast majority of the references to Shakespeare were found. These were not, in the main, erudite publications which would have been the reading matter of the mentors and disciples of the so-called “Conferências do Casino”, but rather educational and recreational magazines intended for a less literate readership, who did, however, frequent the theatre and the opera, venues which were popular with the rising bourgeoisie, as a place to meet and socialise. Among this wider public, which was mainly female, the survival of tastes influenced by ultra-romanticism led towards a preference for a certain type of subject matter: tragic episodes, crimes or overwhelming passions. Whatever the justification may have been, the criteria which influenced which texts were to be translated were ultimately determined by the Portuguese polysystem, or rather chosen in accordance with their compatibility to the role they were to perform within the target culture.

The success of the theatrical productions, namely *Othello* and *Hamlet* at the D. Maria II Theatre and opera productions at the S. Carlos Opera House, for example, Rossini’s *Otello* and Verdi’s *Macbeth*, excited the interest of the Portuguese public in Shakespeare, encouraging the publication of translations (originals or not) in magazines in the second half of the nineteenth century. Such periodicals endeavoured to satisfy their readers by entertaining them with familiar stories of love, jealousy and madness in harmony with the taste of the times—readers who were undoubtedly the same people who attended the theatres where Shakespeare’s plays and their adaptations for the opera had been so rapturously applauded.

The intrinsic ability of Shakespeare’s characters to personify topical themes enabled them to retain their relevance throughout the nineteenth century, just as they continue to do today: Hamlet’s existential doubts, the romance of Romeo and Juliet or Othello’s jealousy were the favourites of both the writers and their readers, as well as the public in general, even inspiring a few original poems in Portuguese which were published in the periodicals under study.


Generally speaking, both these poems and the reception of Shakespeare in the periodicals should not be viewed as a form of renewal of the Portuguese literary system but rather as a means of corresponding to the horizon of expectations of readers of magazines which were clearly intended for recreational purposes. The same cannot be said, however, for the versions which were created for the Portuguese theatre and opera stages, as these contributed not only to the elaboration of a new repertoire but also to the assessment of the talent of Portuguese actors.

It is, therefore, fair to say that, in the reception of Shakespeare in the Portuguese periodical press of the second half of the nineteenth century, it is the recognition of the British playwright’s unquestionable genius which stands out as the single paradigmatic landmark.

92 On this subject see Machado, *Do Romantismo aos Romantismos*.

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